2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

Na wesi (spear dance) chanted by Tatchini of Kambara 575

Takiva na ika ni wai ndrondro,	They catch the fish in the current, 539
Kithoka na ika somi lolo,	They spear the fish at high tide,
Ndua a theva urea mo.	A southeast wind begins to blow.
E sa urea sa lutu koto.	When it blows there is no chance (to fish).
Raunama nongguo.	The fishermen turn homeward.
Kena wai tambu-nda vakarorongo.	The sea becomes still,
E tumbu a tha kau nggai ndrondro.	Then it swells as I go back (to the beach).
E ruru a tha kau sunggai koto.	So I go home and the storm abates.
Koi au a wai vuni rongorongo.	I listen to the secret of the sea.

Volau, a *meke* master of Namuka, creates new dances of the following 575
types: *seasea, vakamalolo, meke ni malungu* (club dance), and *meke iri* (fan dance). He was born on Oneata and his father was born on Matuku, which, according to the natives, is a *meke* making center. When the people of Namuka want a new *meke* they present kava to Volau. He accepts the kava and in the evening it is prepared. On the first or the second evening, while he is drinking kava, the god comes to him and he expresses the words, the rhythm, and the movements of a *meke*. He teaches it to the people, who must learn it quickly because Volau forgets it immediately.

ECONOMIC LIFE

PROPERTY

Land Scarcity

Scarcity of fertile soil is a basic factor in the economic life of the south- 311 ●
ern Lau Islands. On the limestone islands the supply of garden land is fixed and limited. Practically all the garden land that can be profitably cultivated is in use. On the volcanic islands, the supply of fertile land exceeds the demand.

On Kambara all the best land (*nggele ntchina*, true soil) and some of the 241
second grade land has been cleared and is used for gardens. In years of 311
normal rainfall the supply of garden produce remains more or less constant, and garden production is only slightly below the needs of the population. New land is rarely cleared because the natives think it will not repay the effort. They believe that extensive cultivation of more second grade land might increase production somewhat in years of normal rainfall, but that in dry years there would be a shortage of food regardless of how much land was under cultivation. They think that more intensive cultivation, by native methods, of the land already cleared would increase the yield sufficiently to 241
supply their needs in normal years with less labor and more profit. However, 311
several factors work against intensive cultivation. First, the dislike which the 461
nobles feel toward work on the land has had an effect upon the whole popula-

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

241 311 461 tion. Many men consider garden work arduous and tiresome and spend as little time as possible on their gardens, preferring to spear fish, sail, or do carpenter work, or to do nothing. Others work sporadically. Second, unequal distribution of the garden land reduces the output. Some clans, especially those in the land phratry, own two or three times as much garden land as others. If a clan is rich in land and poor in man power, at least part of its land is neglected through lack of labor, even though some of it is occasionally lent for cultivation to another clan. On Kambara the clans Vuanikathu and Nawi, both of which lack young men, own more land than they use. Matasoata and Tanggu are poor in land. Third, the *kerekere* system (pp. 207-208) discourages conscientious work on the land.

241 461 The headman of a prominent clan on Kambara owns good garden lands, which he cultivates with great care and patience. His crops are large with a relatively high yield per acre and he always has enough food. His garden produce is constantly solicited by relatives. In fact, the headman's industry has slackened that of his relatives. One day he told me that during the past three days 20 baskets of sweet potatoes had been stolen from his garden. [674] He knew the thief was a relative but did nothing about it because if the theft were exposed the prestige of the clan would suffer.

Industrious individuals are rare but they enjoy high social prestige. If one member of a clan has a good crop and food is needed for a birth, marriage, [558] or death feast within the clan, he is expected to contribute the bulk of his produce. If he does not do so, he loses prestige. One young man of Undu had the only yam garden on Kambara and had given it great care. While he was absent from the island toward harvest time, his grandfather died and his clan consumed the yams in the death feast.

On Wangava, claimed by Naivotavota clan, Kambara, only a small part of the best garden land is utilized. The gardens have been deserted because of fear of evil spirits which bring illness. But, aside from this fear, one clan cannot furnish the labor necessary to take full advantage of its natural wealth and other clans hesitate to solicit land on a spirit-infested islet.

On Fulanga, all the land which will yield even a meager crop is under cultivation. All possible garden lands have long been cleared and the supply is fixed. Intensive methods are uniformly employed and production is just about at the maximum under native methods. Garden work is so difficult that every man who harvests a crop must be industrious. Though Fulangans work much harder than their neighbors, part of their food must be collected from the bush and imported. The land situation on Ongea is similar to that on Fulanga except that the food problem is not so acute.

Namuka and Mothe have more than enough food. Only part of the best, fertile land of Mothe is used for gardens, which yield large crops with a

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

CHAPTER I

A HAZARDOUS WORLD

KAMBARA, A FAMINE ISLE

A mate na rawarawa 539
Me mbula—na ka ni thava?
A mate na thenggu.

Death is easy.
Of what use is life?
To die is rest.

Fijian proverb.

SILHOUETTED against the sky, Kambara presents the 133
long, low outline of a basin-shaped limestone island, about 4½ miles long by 3½ miles wide. It is broken at the north-west by a volcanic hill. From the summit of this hill, one sees a world of sky, sea and forest. Below lies the dark green ghoulish jungle, stretching to the edge of the island. It is encircled by a turquoise lagoon, which is framed with a pink and purple coral reef fringed by dazzling white surf. Beyond lies the deep blue sea.

Here and there along the shore are sandy flats covered with 133
coconut groves and brush, and on these flats are situated four 361
villages: Tokalau, Lomatchi, Undu and Tanggu (officially [311]
designated Nggalinggali). Tokalau and Lomatchi, half-a-mile apart on the west side of the island, communicate easily along the beach on foot, as do Tanggu and Undu, a mile apart on the east side. Contact is more difficult between the two sides of the island, separated by the rough and thickly forested limestone basin. It can be effected through the bush on two [487]
rough narrow trails, or around the island by canoe, and also at low tide on foot. The two sides of the island are separated not only by physical barriers but also by invisible ones, for [776]
the jungle and lagoon are peopled with spirits, frequently hostile and malicious.

5: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1949 OQ6 Lau OQ6

in quantity to fulfill the needs of the group, without placing undue burden on either sex or on any one individual. The method of sharing the feast tends toward a systematic, equitable distribution of food within the household group.

Now it should be noted that, for the self-maintenance of this diet pattern, each household must have access to three types of resources: namely, garden land, bush, and fishing grounds. With this point in mind, let us glance at the system of land use in southern Lau.[18] After the British took over the Fiji Islands in 1874 and peace was established between native factions, the clan-hamlets moved out of the interior of the Lau islands and settled on adjacent lots on the windward[19] shores, forming coastal villages. But they kept their ancient land divisions and proprietary clan rights. Volcanic islands like Mothe were divided into pie-shaped sections bounded by natural ridges which separate the fertile valleys, and each clan had the use of the garden lands, uplands, and fishing grounds of the section wherein its hamlet had formerly been located. On limestone islands like Fulanga where the valley and ridge conformation is absent, land sections were not pie-shaped; but a similar principle of land division nonetheless prevailed. Formerly the bush and fishing grounds in the vicinity of each site occupied by a clan-hamlet, its jungle fruits, garden lands, and other resources belonged to the hamlet. Each household within a clan-hamlet had the use of a piece of the hamlet's garden lands and all the households of the hamlet together had access to the hamlet's bush and fishing grounds.

After the establishment of coast villages, the bush and fishing grounds belonging to the clans of a village were used in common by the whole village group, but the ancient division of garden lands by clans and households persisted. Furthermore, certain clans or villages claim ownership of one or more of the small uninhabited limestone islands in the community. For example, Naivotavota clan of Nggalinggali village on Kambara claims the island of Wangava and its members supplement the crops they raise on their meager garden lands on Kambara with those they raise on Wangava, and also use Wangava's rather extensive forest and lake products. Undu village on Kambara claims ownership of the island of Marambo and uses its resources. Indeed, all the uninhabited islands of the community are claimed and used to supplement the resources of the owning groups. Thus the land use system of Lau is closely related to the basic ecological arrangement of the area and functions to insure a balanced distribution of various types of island resources among the local groups of each island and to render accessible to each household means of obtaining a balanced daily diet.

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[18] For details *see* Thompson, 1940a, 1940b.

[19] Except Tokalau and Lomatchi located on Kambara's leeward shore near the anchorage.